

Paperback writer Lennon can't let it be

SAVAGE and funny comments written by John Lennon in the margin of a book about the Beatles throw new light on the stresses and strains within the group.

The comments appear in a 76-page biographical booklet of the Beatles, to be sold at auction this summer. It was published by the company, Apple Corps, in 1971. Lennon wanted the book suppressed because he felt it was biased in favour of Paul McCartney and his wife Linda and against himself and the others.

He annotated nearly every page, correcting errors and adding revealing comments about almost every episode in the Beatles' history.

The book, which is signed 'Lennon' on the cover, provides conclusive proof that, even in the Sixties, the group was experimenting with drugs. Alongside one photograph of the group, for instance, Lennon has amended a bland caption to read: 'Staged photo pretending to be the fab four: all waiting stoned for it to be over.'

Against another, when they had moustaches, he wrote: 'Paul started this moustache business because he'd split his lip on a "stoned" moped ride—purely functional really.'

The full extent of the intense—and at times bitter—rivalry between John and Paul also comes across vividly in his remarks and comments. In one

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1962 picture of McCartney, Lennon drew a huge bubble from his mouth containing the words: 'I'm always perfect.' On another picture of Paul he drew a small Hitler-moustache—and against a chronological note for 12 March 1969, which read: 'Paul McCartney's wedding at Marylebone Registry Office to Linda Eastman,' Lennon crossed out 'wedding' and substituted 'funeral.'

For another entry, dated June 1968, which read: 'Paul to Hollywood,' Lennon added: 'Cuts Yoko and John out of film! . . .' And for 16 March 1971, which read: 'Paul and Linda in

Los Angeles accept Grammy award for Let It Be, best original film score,' he added: 'Just to embarrass us and Spector after he'd "denounced" Phil in L.I.Be.'

Next to an entry for 30 December, which reads: 'Paul McCartney files court suit demanding dissolution of the Beatles and a receiver be appointed,' Lennon added 'What about his [unreadable] songs shit?'

According to Hilary Kay, the Sotheby's expert in charge of the auction on 28 August, when the book is expected to fetch £10,000-£15,000, Lennon's handwriting throughout the book shows just how upset he was by what he saw as the bias in the book, and

especially the short shrift given to Yoko in contrast to Linda.

On one page, in large capitals, he wrote: 'This book is so prejudiced against John, Yoko and slightly against Ring(o) and Mo and G(eorge) & P(at)tic) that I want to know who put it together and fire them!'

He is honest about Yoko. Against an entry for 23 April 1970 which reads: 'John and Yoko to California for extended holiday,' he has crossed out the last two words and substituted 'therapy.'

But he is also tender. Across the last page, showing a picture of the two of them, he wrote: 'The minutes are crumbling away.' More than he knew.